

The New Orleans Regional Planning Commission is pleased to present quarterly news, events, and project updates to a region-wide audience.

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Letter from the Director



As the summer starts, the Regional Planning Commission is beginning the “home stretch” of a number of efforts and initiatives that keep the region eligible for federal funds. On the transportation side, updates to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP, a.k.a. the long-range plan) for the urbanized areas in our region are being drafted. This has been accomplished by our staff that undertaken extensive and targeted outreach to a myriad of stakeholders, local governments, non-profits, advocacy groups, economic development interests, and the public. That outreach has helped inform our understanding of the needs of both individual communities and, by identifying commonalities, plan for programmatic infrastructure investments and policies that will ultimately improve mobility while being mindful of safety, equity, resilience, and respect for the natural and built environments in the entire region.

Additionally, our economic development team is nearing completion of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy or CEDS update for the region. The CEDS is the policy

document that advise the US economic Development Administration of our economic development strategies, and identities projects and initiatives that will our region achieve them.

RPC continues to monitor federal rule-making and guidance related to the implementation of the IIJA, as well as funding opportunities for projects and programs RPC can help implement in our region. RPC staff is coordinating with local entities to review opportunities and eligibilities to receive discretionary grant funds for a number of initiatives promulgated in the IIJA.

We undertake these tasks with the understanding of a forecasted active hurricane season, and are hopeful of being spared the impacts our region suffered as a result of Hurricane Ida last year.

As always, we look forward to continued working with our Board members, in appreciation of their leadership, guidance, and service; our partner agencies at the local, state and federal levels, and the residents of our region who makes us unique in America.

With Gratitude-

Jeff Roesel

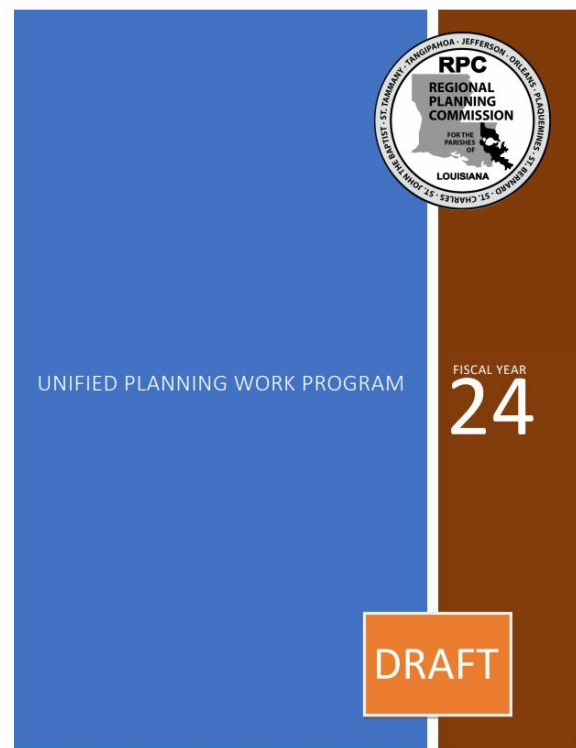
RPC is in the process of developing a Resilience Framework to guide future resilience planning within the MPO. The resilience staff are currently putting together a baseline conditions report to act as the initial guiding document for future resilience projects including a Louisiana Watershed Initiative (LWI) plan, the EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG), the Transportation Resilience Improvement Plan (TRIP), and other resilience plans as identified. Completion of the Baseline Conditions report is expected in Summer 2023.

Staff are currently assessing the vulnerability of transportation assets in the region against common natural hazards using the DOT's Vulnerability Assessment Scoring Tool (VAST). This pilot project will be used to apply for PROTECT funding in August 2023. If awarded a PROTECT planning grant, the RPC will use these funds to conduct a more comprehensive Transportation Resilience Improvement Plan (TRIP) that will further identify opportunities for improving the resilience of the region's transportation system.

EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG) were announced in Spring 2023 and directs states, tribes, and MSAs to develop climate action plans to identify greenhouse gas emissions reduction measures. RPC applied for this non-competitive grant in May 2023 and is expected to be awarded funds in Summer 2023. The Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP) will be due in March 2024 and a more Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP) in Summer/Fall 2025. A final progress report will be due in 2027. The EPA plans to also open a competitive grants process for implementation grants to fund these identified projects in late 2023. By participating in this planning grant, member parishes should be eligible to apply for implementation grants to fund projects aimed at reducing emissions.

The Louisiana Watershed Initiative is developing guidance for each region in the state to develop regional watershed plans. The RPC will create a plan for Region 8, and will seek opportunities to coordinate with Regions 6 and 7, which include portions of RPC parishes. RPC plans to include this watershed plan within the overarching resilience plan to help guide flood mitigation and adaptation strategies. This plan will be completed in December 2025.

In May we hosted our first kick-off meeting inviting various parishes and municipalities to introduce this new resilience program and gather feedback about current work and plans in the region. Another stakeholder meeting is planned for early August to gather input from local municipalities and parishes. As work progresses on these various plans, RPC will continue to invite member Parishes and regional stakeholders to join in this process of creating a regional resilience framework.



Severn Avenue Corridor Project Completed

Congratulations Jefferson Parish on the ribbon cutting for its new multi-modal major avenue! In January 2013,



the RPC initiated a Stage 0 land use study on behalf of Jefferson Parish to explore multi-modal access throughout the vibrant Severn corridor connecting Metairie CBD (Fat City), Lakeside Mall, and the levee top recreational path at Lake Pontchartrain. Building upon the new zoning requirements of 2010, this study's purpose was to provide improved bicycle and pedestrian amenities, landscaping, gateway landmarks, and street furniture enhancements for a complete streets approach to the Severn Avenue corridor. Perez Architects, Meyer Engineers, and ITS Regional were contracted by RPC to evaluate existing transportation conditions along Severn Avenue and possible connectivity from

Veterans Memorial Boulevard to West Esplanade Avenue leading to the Lake Pontchartrain levee path. Stakeholder advisory groups were formed from local agencies, businesses, and citizen groups.

These projects require lengthy timelines from planning to completed construction. Previously, the RPC worked with Jefferson Parish to complete the *Metairie CBD Land Use and Transportation Study* (2004) outlining specific needs for the CBD. This also led to LDOTD funding through a Transportation Enhancements Program Grant for trees, benches and sidewalks on 17th and 18th Streets within Fat City. Both the Fat City project and the Severn Avenue project improved the 44-year-old subsurface drainage conditions within the Metairie CBD bringing the Parish up to current standards in this area.



RPC Joins Harahan and Jefferson Parish in Celebrating Ribbon Cutting on Sewer Lift Station Rehabilitation

On June 13, 2023, the City of Harahan, Jefferson Parish, and RPC celebrated the rehabilitation of sewer lift station #8. Mayor Baudier, Harahan Councilmembers, Jefferson Parish Councilman Deano Bonano, Governor John Bel Edwards' Delta Regional Authority (DRA) designee Roderick Scott, and the contractors who worked on this project all came out to commemorate the occasion. This project was funded by Delta



Regional Authority, in partnership with Jefferson Parish, and will benefit 6,576 people and 2,859 households within the City of Harahan.



RPC Staff Member Highlight - Maggie Woodruff



Maggie Woodruff is a native of the New Orleans area. The Regional Planning Commission (RPC) welcomed Maggie in 2011 as the Director of Economic Development. Maggie has 27 years of experience in the economic development arena, beginning with the New Orleans Chamber and the Louis Armstrong International Airport (as Deputy Director of Community Development and Government Affairs). While working at the airport prior to Hurricane Katrina, she was involved in early conversations concerning the relocation of the airport, which has now occurred.

Maggie is known for her vibrant personality and ability to facilitate multi-agency meetings. She especially enjoys supporting non-profits and government agencies in obtaining projects and grants that impact the economics of the region.

Maggie obtained a MURP (Master of Urban and Regional Planning) from the University of New Orleans (UNO) and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from UNO. While attending UNO's College of Urban and Public Affairs (CUPA), Dean Fritz Wagner introduced Maggie to the love of her life, Roy Woodruff. The Woodruffs enjoy a rich family life encircled by children and grandchildren.

Maggie will be enjoying a well-deserved retirement beginning in January 2024. She intends to expand her

love of dancing (which currently includes swing, zydeco, and country), continue reveling in music festivals, and maintain her avid biking practices. If you would like to contact Maggie before 2024, please reach out at: mwoodruff@norpc.org, or catch her at Jazz Fest, a dance night, or on a bike path in the region.

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